

Sociological explorations of sexuality in Europe

bodies, practise and resistance
in troubled times

Book of Abstracts



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OPENING WITH GREETINGS FROM THE ESA PRESIDENT SUE SCOTT -
9.00-9.30

OPENING SESSION - 9.30-11.00

OPENING SESSION: VULNERABILITY AND RESISTANCE. BACKLASH AND SEXUALITY AND GENDER RESEARCH

Discussants: Joanna Mizielińska, Eszter Kováts, Shaban Darakchi

Convenors: Justyna Struzik, Agnieszka Król

The opening session is an invitation for a discussion on the situation of sexuality research in the times of so-called backlash. We will focus on regional perspective analyzing the processes happening in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). How the anti-gender movements, in fact, influence the knowledge production in the field? What challenges do we face as researchers working in the field of sexuality studies in CEE? As “anti-gender movements” are becoming louder in many parts of the world including South America and Western Europe can we speak about any specificity of the CEE backlash? Drawing upon literature that decentralizes western gaze, we would like to discuss how the specificity of developments of emancipatory movements in the region speaks to the backlash? Is the very term backlash even adequate for the post-socialist understandings of sexual citizenships? How to theorize about sexuality and gender in the backlash times? How and to what extent gender ideology and backlash influence positionality of researchers? What are the resistance strategies and how are they enacted in everyday practices at the academia?

TRAJECTORIES OF LGBT RESEARCH IN ISRAEL

Amit Kama

This presentation is based on a literature review, which constitutes an attempt of mapping and understanding of LGBT (lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender) research in Israel, its evolution, and distribution. This meta-analysis sheds light on how changes in the social sphere had paved the way for a sudden growth in this field and also strives to explain the various actors who operate in the field. Thanks to the small size of Israel, it is possible to aggregate the entire catalogue of studies carried out here. The corpus includes all (N=586) scholarly works – masters theses, doctoral dissertations, journal papers, books, and book chapters – published about Israeli LGBT people and/or related issues in between 1942 and 2018 by 437 individuals. Several aspects were critically examined: historical trajectories and distributions of disciplines, topics, genres, researched populations, and authors. A substantial progress in the number of publications per annum is clearly visible: From 1942 until 1998 only a scant number of publications were published. As of 1999, the trajectory has been rising steadily. This finding demonstrates how socio-historical, legal, and judicial transformations have their effect on the academic field. Only when the macro climate of opinion has improved and overall tolerance towards LGBT has evolved in tandem with palpable strides to protect LGBT, the dormant field began to thrive. Four disciplines, each of which constitutes more than 10% of the corpus, comprise more than a half of publications: Social work, sociology/social science, psychology/psychiatry, and law. Two disciplines conceive of homosexuality as a problem that needs attention by therapeutic professionals. Adding medicine in this context, the accumulated percentage is 29%, making these disciplines the top of the list. Homosexuality and gender dysphoria have been framed as 'something-to-be-done-with' and hence the interest by social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and medical researchers. I hope that this paper will foster and inspire further studies, especially in non-English speaking countries/non-Western arenas, that may enhance our understanding of the evolution of LGBT studies worldwide and the roles various human agents, theories and epistemologies, and macro socio-historical developments play in its progress.

QUEER FATIGUE – UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS, EMOTIONS AND CARRYING ON AMONG LGBTQ ACTIVISTS IN POLAND

Justyna Struzik

Queer fatigue, understood here similarly to the notion of feminist fatigue, could be defined as a certain feeling of failure on the one hand caused by unachieved goals, and on the other determined by structural difficulties encountered by the activists in a hostile social environment. Such experience is particularly salient in those countries, in which some basic LGBT rights are guaranteed to some extent, yet the struggle for full recognition of queer citizenship seems unsuccessful at many levels. Poland, being a member of the EU, respects selected LGBTQ rights, while the others remain violated. In my paper I want to look at the local queer activism through the prism of disappointment, frustration, tiredness voiced by the activists during the interviews I conducted.

The aim of this paper is then twofold. Firstly, I discuss different meanings of 'queer fatigue' expressed by the activists during the interviews. I want to explore various emotions that often accompany a sense failure present in the movement. I also draw on the role of these emotions in re-shaping and reconstructing goals and strategies of the LGBTQ movement. The second goal of the paper is to look on ways in which activists try to overcome the queer fatigue and sustain their involvement in activism. I want to develop the idea of 'queer fatigue' by locating it in a local context of Poland. The paper is based on a qualitative study conducted in Poland among LGBTQ activists in several large cities between 2012 and 2016. During my fieldwork I was carrying out narrative interviews with representatives of both formal organizations and informal groups and networks.

QUEER ACTIVISM IN UNEXPECTED PLACES: THE CASE OF LGBT ACTIVISM IN SALENTO, SOUTH-EASTERN ITALY

Francesca Romana Ammaturo

In recent times, the region of Salento in South-Eastern Italy, has become one of the most popular gay-friendly touristic spots in the country and several LGBT organisation operate in this territory since the last few years. In this paper I map the creation, development and challenges of the LGBT movement in this Italian sub-region by looking at forms of negotiation between "local" and "queer" identities and beyond narratives of "metronormativity" of LGBT identities (Halberstam 2005) and from the perspective of 'critical regionality' (Gopinath 2007; Binnie 2016) and 'meridian thought' (Cassano 2001). Through semi-structured interviews conducted with four local LGBT activists in 2016 and ethnographic observations carried out at Pride events in 2016 and 2017, the article looks at conflicting social processes whereby local activism is rooted in situated allegiances and interactions with the territory and its population, whilst being permeated by globalising dynamics of LGBT identity politics.

SEXUAL SATISFACTION IN CONSENSUALLY OPEN AND CLOSED RELATIONSHIPS IN POLAND

Beata Tylus, Katarzyna Grunt-Mejer

We will present the results of the study conducted in Poland in order to compare the sexual satisfaction of people living in consensually closed and open relationships, and to determine the association between sexual satisfaction and monoamorous/polyamorous identity, openness to sexual experiences and sexual sensation seeking. In the study 244 persons were surveyed, of which 164 described their relationship status as monogamous and 65 as consensually non-monogamous. People who were consensually non-monogamous showed higher results on the sexual satisfaction scale than those who were monogamous. People who were more open to sexual experiences and sexual sensation seeking showed a higher sexual satisfaction. It was also determined that those who live in the non-preferred form of relationship showed a lower sexual satisfaction. People with polyamorous identity are more open to sexual experiences and seeking sexual sensation. The least satisfied group were those who have a polyamorous identity but live in monogamous relationships. It was also confirmed that there is a relationship between the number of sexual partners and sexual satisfaction.

“THE MEDIA POLY IS NOT MY POLY”: AN ANALYSIS ON SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF SELF-PERCEPTION AND MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF AND IN MULTIPLE RELATIONSHIPS

Stefan F. Ossmann

Although becoming a hot topic within the last five years throughout different academic disciplines, we still know little on polyamory (multiple emotional and sexual usually long-term relationships by the knowledge of all involved persons). The most things we do know have been explored by interviews and questionnaires of affected people, while the media representation has so far been overlooked by researchers. The latter draws its importance by the impact of media framing the societal discourse, especially when it is a new topic with no or minor personal experience by the audience.

Within the project “Polyamory in media, social and identity perspective” funded by the Austrian Science Funds FWF with a duration of 36 month, 368 newspaper and magazine articles published in Austria, Germany and Switzerland over the period of one decade (2007-2017) have been examined by a qualitative content analysis. Those findings have been contrasted with the results of 34 narrative biographical interviews drawn from 14 polycules, conducted in Vienna, Austria.

In detail, the research questions aimed to find similarities and/or differences on the aspects of love and life history, classification within the (extended) LGBT acronym, social acceptance, and the possible demand for legal and religious recognition. Furthermore, unexpected findings on polyamorous testimonials and advice literature supplement the outcomes.

The conference in Cracow will be the first time that the findings on media representation as well as on self-perception are brought together and presented to the academic community and the public.

NEGOTIATING AND/OR RESISTING: THEORIES AND PRACTICES OF CONSENSUAL AFFECTIVE NON-MONOGRAMIES IN ITALY

Nicole Braida

I will present the theoretical premises and some results of my PhD project, that focuses on narratives about the (re)definition of the concept of love and of the boundaries of intimate relationships by people who live multiple intimate relationships at the same time and with the knowledge and the consent of everyone involved, in the geographical context of Italy. This definition follows that of “polyamory” and the Italian polyamorous “community” is central for my fieldwork, but I included in my sample also people who do not define (or do not define anymore) themselves as polyamorous but who have relational practices that are similar to polyamorous ones.

The project started from an inductive approach and an insider perspective, since I have been familiar with the Italian polyamorous “community” for six years now, both at local and national level. Therefore, my presentation will include a reflection about the specific peculiarities of this position.

The research design is articulated in three work packages: analysis of online discourses (especially in the two main Italian Facebook groups); participant observation during local events in seven different Italian cities and 60 face-to-face in-depth interviews.

Contrary to individualization theories that suggest the impoverishment of human relationships, my approach, influenced by theories of relationalities and queer studies, try to underline the social actors’ effort to conciliate the tension that emerge in (late) modern societies between the social drive towards personal autonomy and the need of emotional stability. According to my interpretation, this can be seen as a form of resistance in this specific historical and cultural context, with different degrees of political awareness and contradictions between theories and practices.

THE CONCEPT OF EROTIC AUTONOMY IN THE WORK OF SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

Christian Klesse

This paper explores the notion of erotic autonomy as it emerges from Beauvoir’s discussion of love, marriage, relationships and (sexual) freedom in *The Other Sex*. Women’s erotic autonomy is described as an indispensable ingredient of mutual and egalitarian practices of love, transcendence and a life in dignity. This view underpins Beauvoir’s critique of monogamous marriage, the double standard, the hegemonic gender order and her defence of women’s non-monogamous life choices. Simone de Beauvoir also practiced consensual non-monogamy in the relationship with her long-term partner Jean Paul Sartre within an arrangement that has apparently not been without pain for many participants (‘essential partners’ or ‘contingent lovers’). The paper locates Beauvoir’s critique within a larger history of feminist political refutations of feminism and traces the reception of Beauvoir’s life and work within debates feminisms and counter-cultural politics in Europe.

READING LGBT+ EXPERIENCE THROUGH MINORITY STRESS: SUBJECTS, VICTIMIZATION, STRUGGLES

Chiara Bertone, Federica de Cordova

During the last decade, the notion of minority stress has been successfully imported into the Italian scientific, professional and political vocabulary used to interpret the experiences of LGBT+ people and their families. Coined by psychiatrists, it has been welcomed by many as a personally resounding and politically effective way to give a name to the detrimental effects of the experiences of discrimination on well-being. The paper presents some first results of the research on the use of the notion of minority stress in Italy. Data are based on focus groups carried out with professionals (psychologists, social workers) and LGBT/queer activists. We have investigated how well this notion is known, which meanings are attached to it, and how it is used both in the context of the care/cure work and in the militant one. In so doing we aimed at exploring what this notion does to the social construction of the subjects to which it is applied, and how it affects their experience, especially focusing on the tensions between victimization and agency. Through the lens of medicalization theories, we see the ongoing process of diffusion of this notion as a collective action, in which different individual and collective actors are involved in competition over definitional power, reinterpretation, diagnostic expansion, strategic claims making. The research shows the tensions between the individualizing, depoliticizing and victimizing tendencies entailed by medicalization processes, and the strategic use of minority stress to support claims for the social and legal recognition of subjectivities and relationships. It also shows how this notion sometimes clashes, sometimes is hybridized, with other, competing frames in understanding LGBT+ experiences of oppression, and in outlining strategies of change.

“FADING-AWAY” WOMEN AND DYSFUNCTIONAL MEN: SEXUALITY IN OLD AGE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA DURING STATE SOCIALISM

Andrea Bělehradová

While in the Western countries studies about sexuality in old age focused on men, in socialist Czechoslovakia in the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s privileged attention was paid to the sexual life of ageing/climacteric women. Then, research focus changed and the problems of sexually dysfunctional (ageing) men fighting impotence came to the fore of medical agenda. In this paper, I track the changes in the medical understanding of sexuality in old age that occurred in Czechoslovakia during the whole era of state socialism. Using the concepts of the sociology of expertise [Eyal 2013] and Ian Hacking's "making up people" [1986], I analyse four main medical journals published between the late 1940s and 1980s. I try to answer the questions: (a) how has the understanding of sexuality in old age changed within Czechoslovak medical expertise since 1948; (b) which discourses did medical experts use and how they perceived sex in old age and; (c) how did the realignment of expertise give rise to new sexual identities of ageing men and women. My research shows that the state was promoting the new population policy trying to preserve the health and productivity of the ageing citizens since the 1960s. Consequently, medical experts became more interested in exploring elderly people, including gynecologists who began to concentrate their research efforts on ageing, particularly in climacteric women while focusing on their sexual life. The metaphor of "fading-away" women, invoking flowers after their prime bloom, prevailed in the scholarly literature until the mid-1970s. Then, the new group of social actors emerged: sexologists. Thus novel expertise was created and the focus shifted away from "fading-away" women to men with erectile dysfunction. The change also modified sexual identities of older women and men and possibilities for their sexual behaviour.

THE SOCIAL DISTRIBUTION OF SEXUAL SATISFACTION. EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES OF USING LARGE QUANTITATIVE DATASETS FOR SEX RESEARCH

Kathrin Gaertner

The Austrian Health Interview Survey (ATHIS) is a representative survey which not only contains variables concerning diseases, health problems and health-relevant behaviors, but also the short version of the WHO quality of life questionnaire WHOQOL-BREF. As one of the 24 items included sexual satisfaction, ATHIS enables basic analyses about the „social distribution“ of sexual satisfaction. First analyses show that older individuals, individuals with chronic diseases and, contrary to intuition and established literature, men suffer from lower levels of sexual satisfaction. It is hypothesized that variables like body image, satisfaction with social relationships as well as pain and the subjective assessment of health are moderating variables. Further relevant predictors are degree of urbanisation and relationship status.

Due to restricted coverage of relevant items and a lack of in-depth information on sexual practices, identities and experience, data from official statistics are considered to be of limited use for sex research. However, results like those shown above not only provide an overview about sexual health in a society, they might also inspire further research on underlying mechanisms responsible for those social differences.

My presentation will cover these and further sexuality-related results from ATHIS, give an overview on other general datasets of potential interest for research on sexuality and will discuss the potentials of quantitative research on the basis of big datasets from official statistics or other quantitative research programmes.

BUILDING RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS IN TROUBLED TIMES

Tuula Juvonen

The Finnish LGBTQ organization SETA and its local branches have organized Gay Liberation and later on Gay Pride Marches since 1975, mostly in Helsinki. The marches started to increase markedly their popularity after the year 2010. That year a group of young men premeditatedly attacked some 80 of the 5000 participants with teargas and pepper spray. Whereas in the following year the Pride attracted a crowd of 7000, in 2014 the amount of people doubled to 20 000 from a previous year's 10 000. In 2018 it landed its all-time record of 100 000, making the Pride march, where one out of every 50 Finn attended, the largest mass event in Finland's history.

In my paper, I focus on the public support and solidarity that people, who do not necessarily identify as LGBTQ themselves, want to show to those who are. What motivates these people to attend to Pride marches, or sign petitions in favor of LGBTQ rights? Whereas I acknowledge the changes in political landscape, the increased attention to human rights issues and the pursuit for legal reforms, as well as the marketization of LGBTQ identities, I am in particular interested in the prefigurative politics that are present in the reciprocal relationships formed between the previously stigmatized people and their allies. I hope they may offer us ways to reach beyond the more familiar polarizing conflict narrative of boundary struggles.

For my analysis, I use as my material the written reminiscences of those people who have participated in the ongoing collection campaign "Most memorable moments", launched by the Worker's Archives on the net. The Worker's Archive is one of the two publicly funded memory institutions with the national task to preserve the memories of LGBT history as part of the national history.

"I WANTED MY UNINFORMED CIRCLE OF FRIENDS TO GET TO KNOW GAY PEOPLE" – FAMILY MEMBERS AS ALLIES TO THE LGBTQ CAUSE

Rita Béres-Deák

In most LGBTQ research, heterosexual family members are usually seen as representatives of societal heteronormativity, who may reject the LGBTQ person (Weston 1991) or constrain her/his/hir self-expression (Kuhar 2007) in order to preserve what Herdt and Koff (2000) call 'the Heterosexual Family Myth'. This in spite of the fact that supportive family members' organizations have long existed in the US (Broad 2011) and in Europe (Cappellato and Manganella 2014). Indeed, parents and siblings may go through experiences not unlike those of the non-heterosexual person, such as dilemmas of visibility, stigmatization and even an awakening to activism. In other words, their intimate citizenship (Plummer 2007) is just as endangered by societal heteronormativity as that of LGBTQ people themselves.

My presentation, based on extended ethnographic fieldwork among same-sex couples and their natal kin in Hungary, will tell stories of people who, through the experience of having a non-heterosexual family members, have become more aware of societal homophobia, heteronormativity and the narrowness of mainstream definitions of kinship, and began to support LGBTQ rights within their immediate environment or through activism. The presentation will trace the process of becoming an ally and the potential obstacles family members face on the way. These accounts can help us revisit theories of kinship, stigma and activism, and show that the supposed contrast between 'queer' LGBTQ families and 'heteronormative' straight ones is misguided and may be an obstacle to a truly queer interpretation of kinship.

„PEOPLE JOIN US WHEN IT'S BAD” POSITIVE MOBILIZATION OUTCOMES OF POLISH LGBT MOVEMENT IN DISADVANTAGEOUS POLITICAL SITUATION

Beata Bielska

Speaking about outcomes, instead of a failure or a success, is widely accepted among social movements scholars (Bosi, Uba 2009; Giugni, McAdam, Tilly 1999; Giugni 1998; Diani 1997). Social movement outcomes are defined here as any intentional or unintentional consequences of the whole social movement's or its part's actions. These outcomes are framed not only by the movement itself but by structure of opportunities and counter-movements as well. For Polish LGBT movement's activists current political situation in Poland (right-wing and/or conservative parties dominating the parliament, active neofascist movement, right-wing cultural influence from other European countries) is disadvantageous. There is no possibility to pass the civil partnership/same-sex marriage law or gender recognition act, there is no real dialogue between the ruling party and the movement, homophobic hate speech is not considered as hate speech etc. However, at the same time a growing mobilization in the movement may be observed – more and more people try to join LGBT organizations or help them. Even medium cities organise or try to organise (Konin, Toruń, Częstochowa, Zielona Góra, Szczecin, Katowice, Opole, Rzeszów) equality marches.

I will try to explain this phenomenon. The presentation will be based on the original ethnographic research conducted between 2013 and 2016 (autoethnography, participant observation, the analysis of the data produced by the movement, individual-in-depth-interviews with LGBT activists and counter-movements' representatives) supported by media analysis.

RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES OF BISEXUAL (NON-)MONOGAMOUS WOMEN IN AUSTRIA

Renate Baumgartner

Bisexual women have to deal with discrimination like allegations of promiscuity and hypersexuality no matter if they live in monogamous or non-monogamous relationships. This paper draws from the first study on bisexual women in Austria. It will focus on the challenges the women face within their relationships and while constructing their sexual identity. Applying interpretative phenomenological analysis, the paper explores the complex entanglement of bisexuality and non-monogamy. The paper shows mechanisms and strategies the women apply to cope with (internalized) prejudice on bisexuality and non-monogamy. Some women adopt negative self-attributions, or excuse antibisexual notions of others, other women find agency in adopting a polyamorous identity.

POWER ABUSE IN QUEER SEXUAL ENCOUNTERS

Ráhel Katalin Turai

My paper proposes to critically explore power abuse in queer relations. I will argue that an uncritical (sex-)positive attitude towards queer sexual experiences might obscure power inequalities, first of all sexism. While sexualities scholarship does not deny power inequalities in non-heteronormative contexts, I nevertheless traced a tendency to overlook abuse when celebrating sexually non-normative practices (see e.g. Scoats, Joseph, and Anderson 2018 on threesomes) – including my own thinking. In the presentation, I will analyze the narratives of Hungarian men and women on their experiences in sexual threesomes, through the framing of my own interpretation shifting over the years, increasingly accentuating violence. I will unfold elements of these threesome narratives which suggest that in these situations older men abused their power over women and younger participants, sometimes even if these others' sexuality would count as less queer. It is both theoretically and politically important to conceive bisexuality as both privileged and suppressed, depending on the context, against the idealization of the bisexual position as double-excluded (Hemmings 2002). Building on fieldwork which discusses power inequalities in queer non-monogamies (Klesse 2007) and in threesomes (Fahs 2009), I follow feminist interventions in sexuality studies which aim at the complexity of power and danger (Vance 1984, McClelland, Fahs and Plante 2018). Such an employment of feminist interventions into sexuality studies is especially important these times when gender studies gets under attack in Hungary and across Europe. I contend that scholarship might use this as an opportunity for critical self-reflection, especially amidst the constant effort to balance between being foreign and national in the Central-Eastern European region. What might be worth hearing from the voice of everyday people hostile against "gender", is the concern about the potential dangers of sexual freedom, if it only means freedom to and does not encompass freedom from (Fahs 2014).

EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES OF INTIMACY AND INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG ROMAN CATHOLIC WOMEN IN FLANDERS

Eline Huygens

While attention to gender, sexuality and religion research, and broader public debates in Flanders have mostly focussed on minority religious traditions, and zoomed in on gender norms, female sexuality, and women's roles in these religions, little is known about how Roman Catholic women experience norms on gender and intimacy amidst religious and secular contexts. This paper presents a preliminary framework and attempts to investigate how religious and secular norms on gender and intimacy are played out upon Roman Catholic women and how they negotiate them. The paper starts from the following main research question: how are intimate and sexual practices, norms, and ethics among Roman Catholic women produced across religious and secular discourses? The paper engages with current academic and societal debates in the nexus of religion, secularization, gender, and sexuality and presents a literature review that is built upon religious studies, gender studies, and the study of intimacies, sexualities and relationships. Throughout this paper, I argue the theoretical underpinnings that will shape my PhD research and I elaborate on the conceptualization of notions such as religion, secularization, intimacy, and sexuality. In order to understand women's experiences of intimacy, I show how religion must be understood in its intertwinement with secularization and how religious women constantly navigate between religious and secular prescriptions.

SEXUALISING THE HUMANITARIANISM-SECURITISATION NEXUS: SEXUALITY, MIGRATION AND HIV

Agata Dziuban and Todd Sekuler

Postcolonial and critical race scholars have documented the hyper-sexualisation of especially black and other migrant men of colour in North American and European social, cultural and political discourses and practices (ex. Puar). At the same time, researchers have pointed to the selective embracing of black and other migrant women of colour by European government structures under conditions that (re-)produce what has been popularly described as “white men...saving brown women from brown men” (ex. Spivak, Ticktin). Few people have considered the consequences on such depictions when they collide with those of highly laden sexually transmissible infections, such as HIV. Emerging out of the archival research and fieldwork by the team of researchers who are focusing on European-level HIV policies as part of the “Disentangling European HIV/AIDS Policies: Activism, Citizenship and Health” (EUROPACH) research project, this paper analyses three exemplary decisions by the European Court of Human Rights concerning persons living with HIV who were facing expulsion from countries within the European Union. By unpacking the details and underlying assumptions of these three decisions – one pertaining to a man from Tanzania who was imprisoned for transmitting HIV to several women in Sweden (*Ndangoya v. Sweden* 2004), another to a woman from Uganda who was deported from the UK despite having been diagnosed with AIDS and reports of politically-motivated sexual violence in her country of origin (*N. v. UK* 2008), and the final to a woman living with HIV who arrived in Belgium after the family of her spouse in Nigeria pressured her to have an abortion (*SJ. v. Belgium* 2015) – we expose certain antagonisms that emerge in the logics of humanitarianism and securitisation as they are enacted through these cases as components of European HIV/AIDS policy worlds (Shore & Wright). Ultimately, we work in this presentation to expose the subject-positions that are produced along the shifting and at times contradictory boundaries of the entangled humanitarian and securitisation logics.

TRANSNATIONAL BELONGINGS OF POLISH LGBTQS IN THE UK

Lukasz Szulc

Mid-2010s have brought some crucial political changes in Europe with rather depressive prospects for Polish LGBTQs in the UK. In Poland, Law and Justice (PiS) party secured the majority of seats in the Parliament in the 2015 elections. In the UK, British voters decided to leave the European Union in the 2016 Brexit referendum. While PiS has reenergized a queer-free vision of Polish national identity, Brexit has reinvigorated British anti-immigrant sentiments, especially targeting recent East European immigrants. These broader political changes and their accompanying discourses translate into everyday instances of homophobia and xenophobia as well as feed into the negotiations of multiple belongings. Drawing on more than 600 survey responses and in-depth face-to-face interviews with Polish LGBTQs in the UK, I will discuss how they navigate their gender and sexual identifications through local, national and regional spaces. I will employ the concept of transnationalism, which does not dismiss the importance of national identity but insists on viewing it in relation to the belongings of other spatial scales, for example that of city, region and continent. I will show, for example, how the rise of PiS in Poland has weakened the feelings of Polish national identity and how Brexit has reinvigorated the Polishness, or alternatively Europeanness, for some of my interviewees. I will also discuss how other interviewees explain their support for Brexit, reevaluating their primary national belongings which oscillate between ‘British-Polish’ and ‘Polish-British’. Finally, I will add the scale of the city, focusing particularly on London, which tends to be perceived by the interviewees as a place of exceptional freedom for LGBTQs. Altogether, I will draw on stories of Polish LGBTQs in the UK to map complex trajectories of their transnational belongings; their views, plans and attachments to multiple spatial and cultural scales, intertwined with their gender and sexual identifications.

DIVERSITY, SEXUALITY AND THE EMERGENCE OF BERLIN'S QUEER ZION

Ruth Preser

Scholarship on queer migration to urban spaces elaborates the sexual imaginary which brands the city as the scene in which gay cultures are rooted and develop, and which allows, and perhaps actively embraces (specific kinds of) sexual diversity. This imaginary assumes contingency among sexuality, transformation storyline, and displacement, and suggests that identity is enabled, enacted, conscripted, and occasionally, violently incited as a result of spatial positions and migration. The proposed paper discusses the shift from lesbianism to queerness and the emergence of racial identities that came to light during a research of the Israeli diaspora in Berlin. While the migration stories celebrate and brand the city as a cosmopolitan and queer haven, they also reveal an ambivalent dimension, which draws on ambiguous historical baggage and current hostility to strangers. The paper explores 'queerness' as a current signifier of class and racial privilege and charts the processes by which identities are produced and reproduced in/by the European Cosmopolis

PARALLEL SESSION 3 - 16.30-18.15
SESSION 7 - WORKSHOP: INSIDE/OUTSIDE/AGAINST:
REFLECTIONS ABOUT BLURRED POSITIONALITIES BETWEEN THE
FIELD AND THE ACADEMIA,

WORKSHOP: INSIDE/OUTSIDE/AGAINST: REFLECTIONS ABOUT BLURRED POSITIONALITIES BETWEEN THE FIELD AND THE ACADEMIA

Giulia Melis, Cecilia Nessi, Esra Ummak

“To begin with praxis, and the praxistical activity of thinking-doing, is to turn academia and Western modern thought upside down”

(Catherine Walsh, *On Decoloniality*, 2018, p.19)

In these troubled times, gender and sexualities studies and researchers have to face two kinds of threats: according to Fassin (lecture in Verona, 28 June 2018) we should watch out from those who hate us (i.e. the recent threats against the teaching of gender studies in Hungary) as well as from those who love us too much (i.e. homo/femonationalist discourses). As researchers, we feel responsible for our knowledge production; at the same time, as feminist and queer scholars, we position ourselves in contradictory ways, “inside/outside/against” (Quijano in Walsh, 2018, p. 74) the institutions, and the academia above all. In other words, we are concerned with “the unrecognized contradiction within a position that valorizes the concrete experience of the oppressed, while being so uncritical about the historical role of the intellectual (G. C. Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, 1988, p.69). Can we - taking positionality seriously - do research on/about/with every subject of inquiry? In other words, how/ can white people do research on/with racialized/migrant people? Can/how straight researchers talk about queer people/issues? How can we overcome the binary thinking of white/racialized or queer/straight without dismissing the relevance of strategic essentialism? Is there a moment where we should stop (Alcoff, *The Problem of speaking for other*, 1991)? How can we conciliate ethical commitments to the field with funding/supervising/disciplinary constraints?

Starting from our different experiences and “translocational positionalities” (Anthias 2002), we propose to create a safe space to discuss some of these points and their implications for the ways and the places in which we produce knowledge. Through the form of the workshop, we aim at disrupting some of the dynamics re-produced through the conference setting (i.e. individual performativity); we propose instead a way of doing-thinking together to advance collectively towards an ethical self-critique of our blurred role-positions inside/outside/against the field and the academia.

Participants at every stage of their ‘career’ are welcome. The workshop will be held in English but translations might be available in other languages according to the availability of volunteer translators.

SELF-MADE MEN OR SOCIALLY-CONSTRUCTED? A ANALYSIS OF NEGOTIATIONS OF PERSONAL AND SOCIAL IDENTITY AMONG TRANS MEN IN POLAND AND THE UNITED STATES

Anna M. Kłonkowska

The presentation addresses transgender men's attitudes toward social constructs of masculinities and their responses to various kinds of social pressure which are placed upon them, most of which are aimed at teaching them to conform to the normative conceptualizations of masculinity in their post-transition lives. It compares Polish and US transgender men's process of re-defining their gender identities and efforts to negotiate personal and social identity in the light of dominant masculine ideals (e.g., their potential reworking, acceptance and rejection of various elements of those ideals, the awareness of the normalizing system's influence) and explores how alternative notions of masculinity shape different experiences of female-to-male transitions in both countries.

This presentation is based on a qualitative research project: 57 in-depth, intensive, semi-structured interviews, collected in Poland (30 interviews) and the United States (27 interviews). Focusing on people who had been recognized as female at birth but self-identify as male, the presentation addresses their ways of defining masculinity, their attitudes toward dominant notions of maleness in their respective countries and the experienced social- and expert discourse pressures to accomplish those socially acknowledged gender-role patterns. The trans men's attitudes to these pressures and their subsequent responses oscillate between passive conformity and conscious, performative resistance, which is herein analyzed, taking into consideration the ethnic/racial identity, homo/heterogeneity of the social structure in their respective countries and previous socialization to various social constructs of femininities.

BEING A NURSE, BEING A MALE NURSE, BEING A GAY MALE NURSE – STRUGGLING WITH HIERARCHY

Urszula Kluczyńska

The modern model of nursing, developed in the 19th century by Florence Nightingale, contributed to this profession being associated with femininity, which prevented men from entering it. On average, one person in ten working in nursing is a man, but in Poland men constitute only 1.8% of the nursing staff. Nursing is still perceived as a 'feminine' profession, and this is linked with some stereotypes describing men's participation in nursing. One of the stereotypes is the assumption that men who choose nursing are gay.

The aim of the presentation is to refer to the assumption mentioned above from the male nurse point of view, both heterosexual and non-heterosexual. The analysis is based on individual, semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The study included 24 licensed male nurses working in the profession for at least 2 years, 5 of whom declared that they were gay. Data were collected between January 2014 and December 2015 in Poznan.

The study revealed some areas for discussion: the attitude of patients and medical staff to gay male nurses or the reaction to the 'suspicion' that he is gay; coming out at work; homophobia and heterocore; male nurses' attitude to the belief that gays are overrepresented in nursing; and also the problem of intimate touch in the patient-gay male nurse relationship is discussed.

POST-COMMUNIST SEXUALITIES: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF HOMOSEXUAL MALE IDENTITIES IN BULGARIA

Shaban Darakchi

Homosexual practices were completely outlawed in Bulgaria under socialism and they were prosecuted by the communist state. After 1989, the issue of homosexuality entered public discourse but support for homosexuality, and in particular male homosexuality, encountered strong resistance from the mainstream media. This resistance was driven by the homophobic attitudes of political and religious elites, which resulted in high levels of discrimination and abuse against sexual minorities and a lack of political will and measures to address this abuse. Ironically, the expansion of the EU in 2007 shifted the perspective on homosexuality, confronting the Bulgarian government with numerous issues in the process of transposing the EU directives regarding the rights of LGBTI people. This study will be one of the first to explore the social construction of gay identity in Bulgaria and it will make an important contribution to the existing literature on the topic of gay identities. The main objective of the study is to investigate the social construction of gay male identities, focusing on what kind of different experiences and difficult exigencies have been faced by three generations of gay men in Bulgaria. These include a) Bulgaria's socialist past, (b) the enlargement of the EU in 2007, and (c) global processes, the Internet and social media. Furthermore, the study promises to challenge the Western concept of gay identity and community by investigating to what extent Western notions of gay identity and gay community are relevant in the Bulgarian context and to what degree they have been externally imposed by Western politics and activism. At the conference I will present preliminary results of the study.

THE RESPECTABLE GAY AND THE IMPOSSIBLE LESBIAN? EMERGING IDENTITY POLITICS IN CHANGING SEXUAL CULTURES IN POLAND THE EARLY 1990S

Agnès Chetaille

In Poland, the political and economic transformations of the turn of the 1990s did not immediately give rise to strong LGBTI movements: during this decade mobilizations remained weak and usually unsuccessfully (this was especially the case of the campaign to add the term "sexual orientation" in the new Constitution). At the same time, gay and lesbian cultural politics that had already started in the 1980s gained momentum and got to spread out through widely read magazines, that from this moment on could be distributed through the general, commercial press system. Drawing on a systematic study of a lesbian and gay magazine called *Inaczej* for the years 1990 and 1991, as well as testimonies published on line retrospectively, and sociological interviews conducted with a few activists writing in the magazine at the time, the paper aims at analyzing the kind of identity politics that was emerging through these publications. In the context of changing sexual (sub)cultures and progressive politicization, what kind of legitimate subjects were created for the cultural and political movement? What were the bodies, subjectivities and practices that were on the other hand excluded, made invisible or impossible, or constructed as "abjects" of this new cultural politics? After presenting the context and general tensions in the material, the analysis will focus on three particular axes: the perspective on gay sexuality; the representation of male effeminacy (*przegięcie*); and the (im)possibility of lesbian identity politics in this setting. Special attention will be given to the legitimizing arguments used to put forward certain representations and strategical identities and reject others, and in particular to the role of transnational circulations and "the West" as a model unanimously shared at the time.

FEBRUARY, 15 TH

PARALLEL SESSION 4 - 9.15-11.00

**SESSION 9: DISCOURSES ON SEXUALITY AND FAMILY LIFE, CHAIR:
EWELINA CIAPUTA**

“SAFEGUARDING YOUR FERTILITY”: ANALYSING THE ITALIAN NATIONAL FERTILITY PLAN AS A CASE OF PRONATALIST POLITICS

Vittoria Bernardini

Pronatalism in Italy is a relatively new phenomenon, as it is only in the last two decades that the issue of fertility was framed as a serious social problem. Demographers first warned about declining birth rates in the 1990s, and by the 2000s the issue had become a target of political action, with pro-fertility positions gaining prominence in the public debate and becoming “common sense” positions across the political spectrum and in civil society.

From the literature review, it emerges that the Italian panic over fertility is not motivated solely by demographic reasons, but represents “a reflection of anxieties about wide-scale changes in Italy, including the erosion of patriarchal power, the reorganization of class structures, and ethnic changes due to immigration” (Brown & Ferree 2005:9). Indeed, much of the discourse on fertility seems to rely on the assumption that a healthy, cohesive society must be based on heterosexual, Italian-born nuclear families with two or more children (Krause 2005:160).

In order to analyse the phenomenon of pro-fertility in Italy, I have selected the publication of the 2015 National Fertility Plan as a particularly salient case event in the wider pronatalist movement. This was a technical document part of a controversial public policy initiative to encourage citizens to safeguard their fertility, with an eye on combating low birth rates (Ministero della Salute 2015).

My paper uses the tool of thematic analysis to unravel the ideological undertones of pronatalism in the National Fertility Plan. Specifically, it focuses on the extent to which pronatalist positions in the document are deployed as a tool of biopolitics in the Foucauldian sense of regulating and controlling the state's population (Foucault 1978). In addition, it explores the assumption derived from the literature that pro-fertility is used to perpetuate conservative models of gender roles and family.

RESEARCHING MARITAL RAPE IN THE POST-CONFLICT CONTEXT OF RETRADITIONALIZATION IN CROATIA

Jana Kujundzic

This presentation would draw from a part of my doctoral research project on the topic of “Marital rape in Croatia: political context and the legal system.” I would present two methodological issues arising from the current political climate in Croatia. Firstly, I would briefly describe examined threats to the gender equality in the current political post-war context of Croatia. Similarly, as seen in other European countries, ultraconservative religious organizations have tried to disrupt the process of ratification of the Istanbul Convention by utilizing the term “gender ideology” which created fear, confusion and moral panic in the public discourse. Oppositions to the ratifications are a part of the larger anti-gender movement in Europe and Latin America and the term “gender ideology” is an empty signifier as well as a travelling concept (Kovats and Poim, 2015; Paternotte and Kuhar, 2017). Croatia has undergone significant changes since the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1990s dismissing its socialist legacy with the support of the Catholic Church and its staunch anti-communist rhetoric which seeks to undo any progress in terms of gender equality achieved during the state socialism. Researching marital rape from the intersectional feminist framework poses a challenge in a climate where the conservative discourse has hijacked any discussion of sexual violence in the public sphere by contesting the term gender itself making it a questioned category of social analysis. Secondly, I would discuss the ethical constraints of researching topics which may cause retraumatization which has influenced my methodological choices of interviewing professionals such as the police, social workers, judiciary and women’s and feminist NGOs as opposed to interviewing victims themselves. The traditional views of family, marriage and gender roles have been strengthened after the 1990s Yugoslav war through the nationalist state building project entwined with the religious dogma which makes reporting crimes such as marital or partner rape even harder for the victims. Therefore, the public discourse surrounding the issue of domestic violence in the debates surrounding the ratification is plagued by rape myths, stereotypical views of gender roles, traditionalist ideas of separation of public and private sphere and misunderstandings of the term gender.

‘YOU ARE A MOTHER!’ PREGNANCY LOSS MOVEMENTS AND UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF THE CIVIL STATUS AMENDMENT IN GERMANY

Julia Böcker

In 2013 the draft law proposing to establish a Civil Status for miscarried fetuses was unanimously adopted by the German parliament. It is now possible for parents to register and bury them. The decision was accompanied by standing ovation for the married couple Mr. & Mrs. Martin who had been engaging for the amendment for months.

In my presentation I want to elaborate an assumption that emerged in the course of my qualitative research on stillbirth and pregnancy loss in Germany: Achievements of the social movement for acknowledging pregnancy loss – like implementing the Civil Status – led to new difficulties and strains for empowering (aggrieved) women.

Based on ethnographic data two findings will be discussed: First: Miscarrying women are increasingly, but also unwantedly, addressed as ‘mothers’. For example, the amendment includes an obligation to give information about funeral opportunities by clinic staff. Narrative interviews reveal that some women feel inadequately labelled as ‘mother’ of a deceased ‘child’ and – as a consequence – are subject to social pressure and justification. Secondly: Legislature enables a symbolic and ritual integration of the unborn child into its family and into society. Simultaneously it facilitates to do so without consent or cooperation of the women who has experienced the pregnancy loss. For example, with the exception of one federal state (Rhineland-Palatinate) the husband (who is father of his wife’s children by law) is now enabled to arrange a fetal funeral after his wife’s abortion.

In summary, it is argued that individual experiences of early pregnancy loss are shaped even more by dominant practices and views (about the foetus, e.g.) paradoxically since a new freedom of choice has been legally institutionalised.

TEACHING ABOUT LGBT+ FAMILIES AND GENDER/SEXUAL DIVERSITY

In 2008, the European Commission presented a proposal for a Council directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment outside the labour market, irrespective of age, disability, sexual orientation or religious belief, which aimed at extending protection against discrimination through a horizontal approach. However, as unanimity is required in the Council, the draft has remained blocked at that stage since then. In its 2018 report, the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) recommends that the EU legislator should continue its efforts for the adoption of the Directive to end the current artificial hierarchy of grounds and ensure that the EU offers comprehensive protection against discrimination in key areas of life. The lack of consensus to approve a directive that compels EU states to ensure that the EU offers comprehensive protection against discrimination in key areas of life is very likely to be related to the inclusion of sexual orientation among the potential axes of discrimination. The announcement of the Hungarian Government Prime Minister of the intention of his government intention to stop financing gender studies university courses is only the latest sign of a worrying shift towards conservative values in some European countries.

In addition, a formal recognition of LGBT couples and their filiation bonds is still incomplete within the EU communitarian legislation. LGBT families and their children often present an unexpected and unknown world to the professionals in healthcare, education, and the courts across Europe, and national training curricula for professionals do not systematically address family diversity. This lack of professional training and the general absence of an inclusive perspective in working with family diversity puts LGBT families and their children under enormous pressure and pushes them to invisibility. Although most of the twenty-eight EU countries obtained a supportive legislation to guarantee equal rights to LGBT+ people and their families, heteronormativity still remains the cultural standard also among professionals, fostering inequitable environments. As a result, even in those countries with legal frames that are respectful to those options that challenge traditional gender and sexual dichotomies and have an advanced legislation (i.e. same-sex marriages and adoption), professional practices as well as academic training risk to reproduce the dominant societal norms and perspectives. In so doing, discrimination is not a mere individual action depending on the personal intention, but rather it is embedded in the systemic functioning of the institutions (school, healthcare, social protection etc.). This panel present different contributions that help to understand the needs, gaps and challenges in professional training that could contribute to a more inclusive practices for LGBT+ families and sexual/gender diversity.

BEYOND LEGAL RECOGNITION: LGTB+ FAMILIES AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES IN SPAIN

Patricia Aljama and Beatriz San Roman

NEEDS, GAPS, AND CHALLENGES OF PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH LGBT+ FAMILIES IN POLAND

Joanna Mizielińska, Agata Stasińska, Agnieszka Król and Justyna Struzik

EVERYDAY LIFE AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS: TEACHERS AND EDUCATION IN GENDER/SEXUAL DIVERSITY IN SPAIN

Marta Mayoral and Ester Malgosa

IN SEARCH OF WORDS. CHALLENGES FOR TRAINING PROFESSIONALS WORKING WITH LGBT+ FAMILIES IN ITALY

Federica de Cordova, Giulia Selmi and Chiara Sità

CULTURAL ONLINE SEXUAL SCRIPTS AMONG YOUTH IN RUSSIA

Liliia Pankratova

Virtualization of private life in the context of the active dissemination of new information and communication technologies (ICT) in the world, including Russian society, raises the question of their role in formation and choosing the trajectories of sexual, romantic and family life by modern young people. The object of analysis is modern Russian young Internet users. The subject is sexual practices of young people in the Internet. The purpose is to classify and describe scripts (patterns) of sexual behavior (search for a partner, establishing relationships) of various groups of Russian youth in cyberspace. Theoretical and methodological basis for the work is: theory of sexual scripts by J.H. Gagnon and W. Simon, the heuristic potential of which was little used in research to identify the existing patterns (cultural, interpersonal and intrapersonal) of sexual behavior in the online environment; conceptual ideas on the transformation and specificity of intimate relationships in the modern world, presented in the classical works of E. Giddens and Z. Bauman ('liquid love'). The empirical basis for the article is the findings of the online focus groups with youth representatives (men and women aged 18 to 30 years old), who were recruited from Russia's most popular and leading dating sites (Mamba, Badoo, etc.) to discuss strategies of sexual and romantic behavior in the Internet, and their virtual presentation. As the result, the normative perceptions about a set of common (generally accepted) elements of these scripts are classified and their qualitative differentiation is given, cultural online sexual scripts of Russian young men and women are reconstructed. Moreover, the prospects and limitations of the sexual scripts concept for the study of erotic online practices are considered. The Internet is regarded both as a factor of formation of sexual culture and patterns of sexual behavior, and as an arena for their implementation and experiment.

GENDER, INTIMACY POLITICS, AND SEXTING IN "NEW TURKEY"

Didem Salgam

Feminist scholars working on Turkey argue that Islamic authoritative, highly patriarchal, heterosexist and anti-feminist ideologies form the politics of gender and intimacy of the current Turkish government, Justice and Development Party (AKP) (Acar & Altunok, 2013; Cindoglu & Unal, 2017; Kandiyoti, 2011; Ozkazanc, 2018; Ozyegin, 2015). Yet the knowledge on how AKP's oppressive and normative politics of gender, sexuality, and intimacy influence sexual behaviors of young people, especially of women in Turkey is too scarce. The existing studies have not addressed the digitally-mediated sexual activities under the AKP regime. To understand how oppressive gender, sexuality, and intimacy politics navigate individual lives, and sexual behaviors of young individuals, we need to understand the experiences and perceptions of young individuals living in Turkey. Reflecting on a set of in-depth interviews with young heterosexual women and men (mostly university students) who practice sexting in Turkey, this paper will first discuss how and to what extent AKP's oppressive and normative intimacy politics affect the sexual behaviors of young individual; and second pinpoint the relation between the increasing popularity of sexting and oppressive intimacy politics in Turkey. How do young heterosexual women and men in Turkey differently feel the pressure of AKP's oppressive and normative politics of intimacy and differently deal with it? Can AKP's repressive politics of intimacy become a pressure point that gives rise to resistance from a group in the society?

'SATISFACTION'?! REPRESENTATIONS OF NON-HETERONORMATIVE SEXUALITY AND CHALLENGES TO THE SEXUAL GOVERNMENTALITY IN RUSSIA

Galina Miazhevich

This presentation is based on an ongoing 2-year AHRC funded project (2018-2020) examining the range of available discourses on non-heteronormative sexuality (NHS) in post-Soviet Russia (1999-2019). Within Putin's conservative nation-building agenda, the Russian mediascape excludes or marginalises alternative sexualities' voices from official discourse. The 2013 law 'On the Prohibition of the Propaganda of Non-traditional Relations' (so-called 'gay propaganda' law) exacerbated the situation further. However, I argue, certain manifestations of NHS infiltrate public space through convergent traditional and new media (Jenkins, 2006) and the performativity of NHS in popular culture (Estrada, internet memes, etc.).

To explicate this claim this paper focuses on one media text—an amateur viral Youtube video by young male cadets from Ulyanovsk's aviation institute mimicking Benny Benassi's hit of 2002 called Satisfaction (<https://www.rt.com/news/416080-amature-video-satisfaction-russia/>). The analysis of this video, related memes, state media coverage alongside audience's perception of this grassroots product (such as online forums) will aim at answering the following set of questions: What are the meanings related to NHS prompted by the video? What challenges does it pose to the sexual governmentality in Russia? Is there a change of public discourse on NHS?

A wave of public's support posted online (memes mimicking the song produced by the elderly ladies, factory workers, etc.) seems to have protected the cadets from expulsion. In a way this grassroots campaign constituted a challenge to a sexual governmentality in Russia. The overwhelming response signified an existence of suppressed grassroots currents inconsistent with the state conservative agenda. The playful 'solidarity clips' from all walks of life in Russia (in response to the negative establishment's reaction) 'demonstrate that Russians can still form horizontal connections, despite the state's monopoly on the public sphere, and despite the threat of harsh penalties for protest in general and "propaganda of homosexuality" in particular' (Gessen, 2018 <https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/how-russias-hilarious-homoerotic-satisfaction-became-a-nationwide-meme-of-solidarity>). However, my preliminary analysis of the data shows a diversity of meanings linked to the video—from an expression of solidarity to homoeroticism. On the one hand, a public's reaction of solidarity exposed belonging to a common discursive field and, on the other, individual online responses demonstrated a significantly diverging readings of the material (e.g. some would see it as a naïve replication of a mainstream popular music hit or a demand for freedom of expression rather than a product with homoerotic connotations). Finally, the analysis shows that the state media's coverage was characterised by a confusion of how to cover the issue. The reactions ranged from a vivid criticism of the clip (e.g. talk show, Channel Russia) to ironic references (Vechernii Urgand show, Channel One). They brought the issue of homosexuality to the 'surface', as well as contributed to video's viral status. In a way this state media's engagement might have produced a contra-effect and undermined the sexual governmentality regime. The paper concludes that it remains to be seen whether there is a change in the overall discourse with the possibility of the gradual 'relaxation' of the acceptable NHS-related codes.

SEXUAL FIELDS, SEXUAL CAPITAL, AND THE PROSUMPTION OF SEXUAL STEREOTYPES: EXPLORING DIS/EMBODIED DESIRE ON HOOK-UP APPS FOR MEN WHO HAVE SEX WITH MEN

Christian Eichert

The transformation and marketization of intimate life in a consumer culture has attracted considerable interest within sociology (e.g., Ansari & Klinenberg, 2015; Bauman, 2003; Giddens, 1992; Illouz, 2007, 2012). We explore consumers' self-commodification strategies within the "racialized, sexual marketplace[s]" (White et al., 2014, p. 769) of location-based smartphone 'hook-up-apps' for men who have sex with men (MSM), in which the consumer is both, the subject who desires, and the object of desire for others.

In this on-going qualitative research project, we draw on netnography, auto-ethnography, and interviews with a diverse sample of men from the UK and US, who find partners for local casual sexual encounters in a virtual space, in which racial sexual stereotypes shape potential partner selection and expectations (Paul, Ayala, & Choi, 2010). For example, Wilson et al. (2009) find that black men are more likely to be described as dominant, aggressive, and masculine, while Asian men are stereotyped as being submissive, docile, and feminine.

Informed by sexual fields theory (Green, 2014), and self-objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Martins, Tiggemann, & Kirkbide, 2007), we identify four distinct strategies how consumers align their sexual habitus with field-level racialized sexual stereotypes through self-commodification strategies, that enable consumers to cultivate field-dependent sexual capital in their online quest for offline casual intimacy. We further identify the mechanisms of doubletranslation at work when consumers translate their embodied (offline) sexual desires into a disembodied (online) sexual marketplace, and then must re-translate (re-embody) their idealized virtual sexual self when meeting a potential partner "in real life" (emic term). We contribute to the understudied field of consumers' intimate life in consumer research (Bettany, 2016), by addressing timely and relevant social phenomena such as hook-up culture (Wade, 2017), marketplace representations of race (Crockett, 2017), and consumers' self-presentation in virtual spaces (Belk, 2013; Iqani & Schroeder, 2016; Murray, 2015).

A WEAK THEORY OF BAREBACK AND CHEMSEX THROUGH THE SELF-NARRATIVES OF HIV-POSITIVE GAY MEN IN THREE SOUTH EUROPEAN CITIES

Cesare Di Feliciantonio

In recent years concerns around the increasing wide-spreading of bareback sex and chemsex among men who have sex with men (MSM) have been raised in several European countries, with sensationalist mediatic discourse around the risks they pose to public health since they are associated with increasing rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). In order to go beyond sensationalism and public health pathologizing approaches, the paper engages with the self-narratives of HIV-positive gay men who regularly practice bareback and chemsex in three South European cities (Barcelona, Milan and Rome). The self-narratives were collected through different research projects at different times (Barcelona 2014; Rome 2016; Milan 2018). Aim of the paper is to unpack the complex negotiations between sexual practices, place, spatial imagery, mobility/tourism, bodies, the performance of masculinities and drugs consumption. Building on the work of Del Casino Jr (2007) and other feminist and queer scholars (e.g. Gibson-Graham, Sedgwick), the paper frames bareback and chemsex through the lenses of 'weak theory', i.e. these practices are conceived as open, in flux, entangled and connected with social processes, locations and personal biographies. The analysis has a spatial focus, movement and traveling emerging as central themes in the self-narratives of the research participants, their practices connecting different physical (e.g. home, the sauna, the club), imaginary (i.e. those cities exercising a strong 'sexual power') and digital (e.g. hook-up apps) places. The situated and weak approach proposed in the paper shows how sexual practices go beyond hegemonic reductionist models and discourses around homonormative masculinities, bodies and domesticated sexualities.

TOWARDS A POLITICS OF QUEER INTENSITIES

Tomasz Sikora

As a late form of modern biopower, the neoliberal regime may be looked at as a system that organizes and distributes (or blocks) certain affective intensities (where affect is not an individualized emotion but material beings' ability to affect and be affected) in a way that forecloses certain forms of life while fostering others. It is important to understand that neoliberalism is not simply a death-producing force, a wholesale necropolitics; it is, rather, a way of creating liveable and desirable versus unliveable and undesirable futures. Queers (not to be confused with respectable gay and lesbian citizens folded into the neoliberal spaces of liveability) find themselves in a very precarious position in relation to any liveable future, while at the same time standing on the very verge of actualizing new intensities (to use Deleuzo-Guattarian terms) that would create new forms of individual and communal life. Life is to be understood here as much more than merely being alive (which in itself is a problematic concept): it refers to a living being's ability to interact and interconnect with its environment, to affect and to be affected, to learn new ways of registering and responding to various intensities. I intend to consider how identity and rights politics is neoliberalism's way of neutralizing the radical potential of queerness (and more generally: difference) and how, on the other hand, radical queer practices and aesthetics not only resist this neutralization, but also actively create and experiment with other ways of being alive and being alive to. What kinds of intensities and actualizations do queer practices in art and elsewhere enable? How is identitarian thinking as a biopolitical tool of control resisted? How do queer bodies remain potentially contagious "bodies of anarchy" within a body politic intent on protecting and enhancing its particular version of "life"?

BEYOND PHARMA-MEDIATED SEX? DOING GENDER, HEALTH AND SEXUALITY IN THE VIAGRA ERA

Raffaella Ferrero Camoletto

Viagra as a cultural object and as a technology of the self, within the wider phenomenon of the so-called sexuopharmaceuticals (Cacchioni 2015), provides an interesting point of observation to investigate the impact of the new socio-cultural and techno-scientific configurations of contemporary biomedicine on the notions of gender, health, body and sexuality.

Positioning at the intersection of Viagra Studies (e.g. Tiefer 2006; Grace et al 2006) and STS (Johnson & Asberg 2012), the paper aims at analyzing discourses and practices of different actors involved in the process of (bio)medicalization and pharmaceuticalization of masculinities and sexualities: the experts in sexual medicine, the pharmaceutical companies marketing officers, the GPs and the patients/consumers. Discourses and practices will be reconstructed through a net-ethnography and a thematic analysis of some media such as websites and forum on line managed by scientific societies and associations of physicians, from pharmaceutical companies and from lay people. Besides, interviews with sexual medicine experts, GPs and sexuopharmaceutical consumers will be analyzed.

The paper will show as a viagrification of masculinity and sexuality (Wentzell & Salmeron 2009) triggers not only pushes to a further biomedicalization of the sexual health, but also forms of re-negotiation of the meanings and of construction of counterdiscourses and of different knowledge/power relationships among the involved actors (Potts et al the 2006).

GAY BACK ALLEY TOLSTOYS AND INHERITANCE PERSPECTIVES: RE-IMAGINING KINSHIP IN QUEER MARGINS

Antu Sorainen

Urban gay men, as a social group, have been relatively invisible as a specific caretaker/giver constellation by both society and literature. For this reason, the paper discusses gay support web constellations beyond monogamy or non-monogamy.

Gay support networks are always constructed in contingent and complex political frameworks, and at crossroads of gender, sexuality and law. Thus, these intersecting factors shape the terms of gay male support relations, including the state institutionalized and legally governed inheritance institution. At an individual level, effects often may feel deeply 'personal' rather than something systematically structured and organized. To flesh out some of the particularities of the impact of inheritance – as an institution – on urban gay lives, I will illustrate ways in which these legal and cultural processes may be of certain significance for gay support networks in the liberal but rapidly declining Nordic societies.

Based on long-term observations of the intimate relations of four Helsinki 'off-the-centre' gay men, it investigates how dominant legal and cultural commitments to kinship relate to gay reimaginings of care bonds in the framework of the gentrifying city. The shifting 'kin relations' of the four main gay male protagonists – 'Gay Back Alley Tolstoys' – mirror some of the shifting contexts of (queer) knowledge, connecting and 'being' that the paper seeks to elucidate. Drawing on anthropological theory on kinship, in particular Strathern's work on relationality, wholes and parts, the paper discusses how urban gay ties in margins rely on tensions between constant everyday re-imaginings between legal, social, political and cultural categorizations. In this, kin diagrams are mobilised as a queer device for the critique of producing, practising and providing knowledge of such care relations that are otherwise not easily recognised or articulated. In this way, the paper approaches contemporary urban gay lives from the perspective of social practices and cultural identifications rather than only from sex.

TRANS RESISTANCE(S). FRIENDSHIP AND NETWORKS OF CARE IN TRANS AND NON-BINARY BIOGRAPHIES IN ROME

Tatiana Motterle

My presentation illustrates a qualitative research on the topic of trans biographies and networks of care, conducted in Rome in Spring 2017, as part of the ERC-funded research project INTIMATE. Citizenship, Care and Choice: The Micro-politics of Intimacy in Southern Europe. The research involved trans and non-binary persons and key-experts, respectively through qualitative/biographic and semistructured interviews.

Giving a central place to the narratives and information gathered during the fieldwork, I will describe some of the main themes emerged from the interviews.

Firstly, the fundamental role of friendship, kinship, affects, and different networks of care and support in the daily lives of participants emerged as a common background. Indeed, these relationships and networks – and their interaction with trans experiences – will appear, along my presentation, as a central element in the different every-day-life strategies and micropolitics trans persons employ, in front of the experiences of transphobia and discrimination they face and the extremely gendernormative medicolegal discourse they have to deal with, when they try to get legal gender recognition according to the Italian law.

Participants' embodied experiences, the signs and hi/stories that their bodies carry, will be interpreted both as a metaphor and the very place of such micropolitics of resistance.

In contrast with a neoliberal narrative of the individual capacity of outcast subjects to overcome the oppression they suffer, I will show how different kinds and levels of collective mutual support – where one is never just either cared for or caring – stand at the roots of a broader and creative resistance to an oppressive context. Sharing knowledge, information and experience, helping and caring for each other, even at a virtual level, are the fundamental tools of such processes.

AROUND THE KITCHEN TABLE. DIFFERENCES THAT MATTER: THE PRODUCTION OF SAFE SPACES BY QUEER AND FEMINIST COMMUNITIES IN ITALIAN URBAN AREAS

Giada Bonu

My aim is to analyse the development of queer and feminist “safe” spaces in Italian urban areas. In the wake of a conservative turn in Italian political landscape, the role of sexual differences and dissident feminist spaces is emerging as a key site for sociological research. On one hand, it shows the heterogeneity of contemporary feminist subjects, crossed by gender, sexuality, ethnic, age differences. On the other hand, it shades light on the radical and conflictive role played by these spaces in urban contexts and traditional institutions, challenging what is so-called security, safety, community, solidarity, alliances. More than room of one’s own (Woolf 1929), these spaces are kitchen tables (Hull, Scott and Smith 1982; hooks 1991), which allow queer and feminist communities to try out a shared sense of safety, strength, bravery, against the feelings of danger, loneliness, insecurity, daily experienced in the city (Hubbard 2001; Hanhardt 2013). Even nuancing the traditional boundaries between public and private spaces. Imaging, producing and preserving a space for “us”, for bodies traditionally read as “others”, outside and against violence, means creating new narratives and imaginary, new networks of care, affection and solidarity.

As a feminist activist and a researcher, I choose a participatory action research approach in order to blur the boundaries between academia and activism, searching new positionality for a different and shared production of knowledge. Unless the great differences among the category of queer and feminist spaces, I’m focusing of three different movement cultures: women’s houses, women’s shelters and transfeminist queer squats. Actually, I’ll present the first results of a pivotal study conducted through four in-depth interviews to activists with visual tools and the results of the first ethnographic period in my main cases, the International Women’s House in Rome and the Women’s Centre in Bologna.

PRIDE – PATRIOTISM – PATRIARCHY: NOTES ON THE DISCOURSE OF SEXUAL CITIZENSHIP IN UKRAINE

Olga Plakhotnik

At the conference, I will present a fragment of my doctoral research project that explores discourses of sexual citizenship in post-Maidan Ukraine. This is a case study of Kyiv Pride 2017 – a week of public and semi-public events that was concluded by the Pride street rally. Whilst Prides and other public LGBT events take place in different Ukrainian cities, the amount and intensity of discussions around Kyiv Pride 2017 were unprecedented. Firstly, a powerful critique of ‘homonationalism’ and homonormativity voiced from within LGBT communities reached a high level and overflowed into the wider society. Secondly, the Queer-Anarcho-Feminist Block (QAFB) joined the Pride rally with a separate agenda that opposed mainstream LGBT discourse (focused mainly on rights-based claims to sexual citizenship). In contrast, QAFB raised such issues as racist and trans-phobic violence, poverty and capitalist exploitation, misogyny inside LGBT activism and the militarization of society. Thirdly, a few anti-nationalist and anti-militarist placards at the rally provoked extremely heated debates on the issues of patriotism and the political standpoint of LGBT communities in Ukraine. Moreover, these debates continue until now and have a corresponding aftermath in LGBT and feminist public events.

Using a queer-feminist discourse analysis, I examine online discussions and other materials from Kyiv Pride 2017. I ask: what discourse of sexual citizenship had been produced by the Pride? How was it negotiated, sustained or challenged in LGBT communities? What kind of subjects-citizens had been activated in these discussions? In my presentation, I discuss the findings and also the epistemological and ethical challenges that I face in the course of my study.

SEXUAL CITIZENSHIP AND DISABILITY: DEVELOPING THEORY TO BETTER UNDERSTAND PRACTICE

Julia Bahner

Disabled people’s sexual rights are not high on the agenda of the disability movement, or in social policy in most European countries. Likewise, inclusion and (re)theorization of sexuality to incorporate disabled people’s sexual practices is lacking in academic work. Disabled people are often de-sexualized and rendered invisible in sexual cultures and imagery. While concepts around sexual citizenship are often based on the LGBT communities’ rights claims, surrounded by a discourse of rejection of non-heteronormative sexual practices, disabled people’s sexual lives are largely unimagined. This paper addresses these gaps, drawing on two research projects. The first project looked at personal assistance services in Sweden, and more specifically the discourses and practices around sexual facilitation for people with mobility impairments (physical support by staff to facilitate disabled service users’ sexual practices). The second project was a comparative study between England, the Netherlands and New South Wales (Australia) exploring the disability movement’s advocacy of policies around sexual support and sexual rights. The results highlight a need to reframe concepts around sexual citizenship to better incorporate disabled people’s needs, both in terms of identities and support practices. Rather than fighting against laws that prohibit non-heteronormative sexualities, disabled people struggle for recognition as sexual beings. Their sexual invisibility has led to a lack of training for staff as well as a lack of policies that encourage sexual expression and provide frameworks for sexual support practices and services. Sexual citizenship theory is queer, which disabled sexualities are also often, but needs further intersectional development to incorporate disabled lived experiences.

MANY FACES OF CITIZENSHIP: "LGBT RIGHTS" AND NON-HETERONORMATIVE SUBJECTS IN CONTEMPORARY POLAND

Monika Baer

Drawing on fieldwork research conducted among non-heteronormative residents of Wrocław (PL), in the proposed paper I problematize theoretical and political premises that define some sectors of LGBT activism and scholarship in contemporary Poland and beyond. Based on premises of "Gay International" (Gaudio 2009), they advocate cultural and legal "sexual citizenship," which is rooted in identity politics and strategies related to civil rights paradigm of a (neo)liberal type. However, while there are still many places in the world where "LGBT rights" keep their subversive potential, they also become tools of symbolic violence, when used to mark certain groups of people (and countries) as "ill-adapted," "backward," or "premodern."

Because cultural and legal "sexual citizenship" has not been so far recognized by the Polish state, activists use all available resources, including collaboration with (neo)liberal institutions, to fight for the "LGBT rights." In the process, they more or less explicitly distance themselves from those perceived as "not properly queer," and come close to meeting criteria of "homonationalism" as discussed by Jasbir Puar (2017). But, "homonationalist" strategies can also assume different meanings in specific "postsocialist" settings. In the context of contemporary Poland, "neoliberal capitalism" can be seen as a sort of LGBT ally in challenging nationalist state and unconcerned or hostile society. On the other hand, the political stance of the movement is not supported by many non-heteronormative persons in whose name it apparently speaks. Thus, various grassroots perspectives of the "not properly queer" subjects destabilize an idea of LGBT activism as representing a minority who seeks the same rights as a majority. Taking all these ambivalent workings of the "LGBT rights" into account, I would opt for a concept of "citizenship" that transgresses (homo)normative categories and move toward inclusion of differentiated ideas of personhood, rights and needs.

UNDERSTANDING SEX FOR SALE

It is often taken for granted that prostitution is a problem and a particular type of problem, even though prostitution, sex work or sex for sale take on different forms, consist of different acts and are regulated differently in different settings and times. In order to understand prostitution, sex work or sex for sale, we need to zoom in on the nexus of money and sex and how it is related in many different ways.

Sometimes, ways of combining them create an uneasiness that others do not.

Based on the collective publication: *Understanding Sex for Sale: Meanings and Moralities of Sexual Commerce* (eds. Skilbrei & Spanger, Routledge 2018) this workshop shed light on ongoing theoretical issues and analytical challenges within the growing research field of sex for sale. The aim of this workshop is to discuss how prostitution, sex work or sex for sale are delineated, contested and understood in different spaces, places and times by analysing how the link between sex and money are interpreted and enacted in particular contexts. We welcome papers that analyse and reflect on:

how prostitution, sex work, or sex for sale have been regulated by the authorities.
the experiences of sex workers and sex buyers, examining how these actors adjust to or resist the categorisation processes, control and stigma they are subjected to.

contemporary definitional issues produced by various actors tasked with controlling prostitution or offering social services to its participants.

THE AMBIGUOUS TAXATION OF PROSTITUTION: THE ROLE OF FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS IN HINDERING THE SEXUAL CITIZENSHIP OF SEX WORKERS

Isabel Crowhurst

This paper explores the understudied and undertheorized role that fiscal policies play in shaping the relationship between the state and sex workers. Drawing on the Italian case, I explore the ways in which ambiguous taxation arrangements operate to penalize sex workers, excluding them from the status of full taxpayer citizenship, and demonizing them as individuals who exploit the fiscal system at the expense of 'good' tax-paying citizens. The maintenance of ambiguous fiscal measures avoids ascribing full fiscal and legal recognition to sex workers, a process which would set in motion politically divisive debates. Fiscal policies, I argue, need to be considered in the context of the governance of prostitution as social mechanisms that have the potential to contribute to the sexual and economic citizenship of this marginalised population, but when unequal and ambiguous, reinforce the social and political liminality of sex workers as lesser citizens, and add to the stigma, damaging stereotypes and violence already waged against them.

ETHICAL SEX SERVICES? SEXUAL ASSISTANCE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN SWITZERLAND

Giulia Garofalo Geymonat

The last decade has seen an expansion in initiatives promoting the development of special sex services oriented to people with disabilities, in Europe increasingly indicated with the term 'sexual assistance'. These have become the object of political and media attention, and arguably call for a critical analysis incorporating both disability and sex workers' rights perspectives. The present article suggests that the creation of these specialised services may be read as a space of concrete encounter between disabled and sex worker activists, potentially producing innovative knowledge for the politics of all sexual services. Based on a 18 month embedded participant observation, I explore the case of an organisation based in Switzerland which brings together sexual assistants, disabled activists and clients, and their allied professionals. Opposing both expert/medical and love/charity approaches to sexual services, members of this organization elaborate their own 'ethical services' model. They recognise that multiple forms of power, vulnerability and dependence cannot be avoided completely in sex services, but need to be addressed and dealt with through concretely promoting more 'ethical' practices, both in services, and in the building of professional community-based organisations and training.

SPEAKING ABOUT SEX FOR SALE HISTORICALLY, SPATIALLY AND POLITICALLY

May-Len Skilbrei

This paper present the aim of the book *Understanding Sex for Sale: Meanings and Moralities of Sexual Commerce*. The book explores the ways in which sex prostitution, sex work or sex for sale are taken for granted by particularly looking at how the relation between sex and money is interpreted and enacted. The aim is to understand how prostitution, sex work or sex for sale is defined, delineated, contested and understood in different places and times. Based on empirical examples the book investigates: 1) how prostitution is defined and problematised at different times and in different cultural and societal settings as a way to identify logics and to disclose what at any time is taken for granted in how society approaches prostitution, sex for sale or sex work, 2) how prostitution, sex work or sex for sale have been regulated by the authorities and what understandings this regulation builds on, and 3) how the sex workers and sex buyers adjust to or resist the categorisation processes, control and stigma they are subjected to. Finally, the book discusses contemporary definitional issues produced by various actors tasked with controlling prostitution or offering social services to its participants.

SURVEILLANCE OF DANGEROUS LIAISONS THROUGH THE NOTIONS OF SEX AND MONEY

Marlene Spanger

From a historical point of view this chapter investigates how the scope of and the meaning ascribed to 'the prostitute' derives from the way in which the state regulate prostitution in different times. The empirical examples are taken from the 1930s to the 1950s focusing on the vice squad and medical authorities' control of young women defined as prostitutes. 'Public women', 'loose women' and 'prostitutes' are all definitions that derive from the way in which authorities have problematized and governed women that were considered as dangerous due to their sexual liaisons with different men. This paper scrutinizes how different constellations of sex, femininity and payment in terms of money, gifts or material goods were ascribed different meanings by the authorities in the 20th century in Denmark as an example of European history. Inspired by Michel Foucault's ideas on governmentality and power, and Viviana Zelizer's idea of the link between sex and money this chapter demonstrates how the authorities' definition of 'the prostitute' served as power mechanisms of the state in governing femininity, which had consequences for not just women that sold sexual services, but for women in general.

I ONLY KNEW MY HOME SEX - SEXUAL SOCIALIZATION FOR SEX WORK (DISTRIBUTED PAPER)

IZABELA ŚLĘZAK

The subject of the speech will be sexual socialization taking place in a group of women providing sex services in escort agencies and other premises in Poland. I would like to focus on how the women who start providing sex services transform their private sexual experiences to use them in their sex work. The main area of analysis will be processes of learning, shifting borders and specializing, which the new female employees undergo. In my speech, I will also present a role of those more experienced workers. They often act as informal teachers or coaches, who introduce the beginning employees into the principles of commercial sex. Furthermore, the roles of clients and other sources of knowledge (e.g. pop culture, porn movies) which impact the course of sexual socialization will be analyzed. The grounds for my speech will be the results of qualitative studies which I conducted among female indoor sex workers in Poland. The data was analyzed with the procedures of methodology of the grounded theory.

NEGOTIATING BIOLOGY: LESBIAN MOTHERS REDEFINING THE BOUNDARIES OF KINSHIP

Marina Franchi

Assisted Reproductive Technologies in Italy were regulated by the so called Law 40 approved after a hardened debate in 2004 and declared unconstitutional by the Italian Constitutional Court in 2014. At the moment of writing we are witnessing a legal void, that de facto prevents lesbian couples and single women from legally accessing ART in Italy. This legal void is then complicated by the legal recognition of relationship rights. Despite the Italian Senate approved a law on civil union in February 2016, parental rights within LGB couples are still unrecognised. LGB individuals in the political debate are still framed as unworthy of the status of parents when they cannot claim a biological connections to the children; at the same, conceiving children through ART is considered as pushing the limits of procreation and threatening the primacy of heterosexuality as sine qua non of generativity. It is against this background that LGB individuals organise their intimate lives, make reproductive choices and develop strategies to protect themselves and their most vulnerable next of kin. Drawing upon 16 interviews with lesbian women, this paper will consider the different strategies adopted by informants to navigate the lack of recognition of sexual citizenship rights, and the challenges that derive from hostile political and social scenario. It will discuss three key issues emerging from the informants' narratives: first, the different strategies that informants adopted in order to conceive. In particular it will analyze the ways in which lesbian women challenge the national legal system either by accessing ART abroad or by bending the Italian health system in order to find structural support for their parenting project. Second, it will analyze how respondents negotiate both the symbolic and legal role of biological connections between the child and the parents as well as between the child and the extended families of origins. Finally it will discuss how the tension between the transformation of reproduction through technology and the resilience of biology in defining parenthood opens up a space for a redefinition of kinship relationships beyond heteronormativity.

'REAL' AND 'OTHER' MOTHERS: USING REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN THE QUEER STRUGGLE FOR VISIBILITY AND RECOGNITION

Julia Teschlade, Almut Peukert, Christine Wimbauer and Mona Motakef

Reproductive technologies challenge our understanding of procreation and parenthood. Technologies like ROPA (Reception of Oocytes from Partner) offer lesbian couples the opportunity to divide the genetic and gestational contribution to motherhood: One partner carries the embryo created from her partner's oocyte and donor sperm. Yet, many countries do not grant same-sex couples equal access to assisted reproduction as well as reproductive and parenting rights. Laws still privilege the heteronormative structure of society and reflect on contemporary dominant values.

In our research project "Family Diversity" ("VielFam") we interview different family constellations (lesbian, gay, trans*, pan, poly) in Germany, who took diverse routes to parenthood (e.g. co-parenting, gamete donation, adoption, foster care, and surrogacy). In our presentation we draw on the case of a lesbian couple who went to Spain in order to use ROPA, which is prohibited in Germany. We show how the women actively resist the naturalization of motherhood and diffuse the public-private distinction of family making. Thus, they engage in conscious and political acts of queering normative presumptions of parenthood and family by positioning their pregnancy within the discourse on kinship. They embed their reproductive decision making and family practices within while at the same time going beyond the heteronormative order by showing solidarity and support for queer families and their public visibility. Anticipating questions like "Who is the real mother?" one mother interrogates: "What is the real mother?" By questioning ideas about the "real mother", she confronts her environment with hidden normative assumptions and unveils them. Furthermore, their story reveals that being a lesbian family always exposes them to the public in a way they cannot escape. Their reproductive decisions are never 'just private' - the queer struggle to recognition thus does not stop once they become a family. On the contrary, for them it marks the beginning of the fight for visibility and equality.

LESBIAN FAMILIES IN RUSSIA: EVERYDAY LIFE UNDER THE ANTI-GAY LEGISLATION

Alisa Zhabenko

During the last years, the Russian state ideology has turned towards instituting 'traditional family values'. This official turn has increased legal and social discrimination against rainbow families. At the same time, the discourse on traditional family values effectively eliminates the possibility of public lesbian parenting. This ideology also was supported by the "anti-gay" legislation that passed in Russia in 2013.

In this paper, I seek to show more than the apparent harm caused by the 'anti-gay law' regarding the effects on lesbian-headed families. As such, I analyse the everyday life and strategies applied by Russian lesbian mothers to tackle the rapidly changing state ideologies and legislative landscapes. I do this by discussing how lesbian mothers in Russia 'manipulate' their social status to avoid possible official or unofficial homophobic actions directed towards them and their children.

My analysis is built on the original data that I collected for the dissertational project from 2010 to 2017. The data consists of 40 interviews with lesbian mothers, the results of two online surveys that I conducted in 2013 (1800 and 100 participants), and other documents concerning the issue at hand. Based on this data, I am going to discuss the influence of the recent changes in Russian legislation on the reproductive choices of young lesbians in Russia. I argue that in order to adhere to 'ordinary' or 'normal' family life, lesbian mothers in Russia are using a number of divergent survival strategies that help them in their everyday life, to stay safe in the anti-queer and anti-lesbian society.

ON BEING PROFESSIONAL: LGB EMPLOYEES NEGOTIATING PROFESSIONALISM AND SEXUALITY IN CYPRUS

Andria Christofidou & Christiana Ierodiakonou

This paper contributes to the growing body of work on LGB people in organisations (Ng and Rumens, 2017; Rumens and Kerfoot, 2009; Williams and Guiffre, 2011) by providing insights into LGB employees in Cyprus and the complexities which characterize the process of constructing and negotiating the self as professional. Cyprus is regarded a widely traditional and heteronormative context (Drydakis, 2014; Onoufriou, 2009). Likewise, the Cypriot employment field is conditioned through, and often reproduces, ideals, imageries and professional roles which reproduce binary gender identities, and accordingly maintain heterosexuality as the normative sexuality. Heterosexuality in its turn contributes to the maintenance of dichotomous gender identities and oppositional, as well as hierarchical, relationships between femininity and masculinity, and men and women (Jackson, 1999).

This paper draws on a qualitative study which employs in-depth interviews with female and male employees identifying as lesbian, bisexual and gay in Cyprus. We ask: what constitutes the 'professional self' and what are the processes through which LGB people construct themselves, and others, as professionals? Who is considered a professional and who is not? What are the qualities which make one professional? We focus on the negotiation of non-heterosexual identities in the process of constructing themselves and others as professionals, and we thus, engage with debates on agency and structure, performance and embodiment, transgressive acts, the consequences and limits of transgression. We highlight the challenges LGB employees face and the spaces they can exercise agency and (re)negotiate prevailing notions around gender and (hetero)sexuality in organisations. We provide thus, an analysis which deals with matters of structure and agency in organization cultures, gender and sexuality norms, and (the limits of) transgression.

THE POLITICAL EFFICACY OF VULNERABILITY: RESISTANCES AGAINST GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND SEXISM AMONGST DANISH FEMALE WAR VETERANS

Sebastian Mohr

Throughout the last ten years, the Danish Armed Forces has prided itself for being an inclusive and diverse workplace, an organization that actively works towards a welcoming environment for all of its employees. In 2011, the Danish Institute for Human Rights awarded the Danish Armed Forces with the so-called MIAPRISEN, an award given to organizations that actively work towards equal and inclusive workplaces. Yet this story of being an inclusive and diverse workplace changes to one of an organization engrained with gender and sexual injustices when female veterans of the Danish Armed Forces tell their stories. In their stories, the persistence sexism and sexual violence paints a legacy of structural discrimination within the Danish military. Based on biographical interviews with Danish veterans, this presentation will look at forms of resistance towards gender and sexual injustices in military culture. Exploring these injustices, the presentation will focus on the self-authoritative spaces that female veterans use to form resistances and build grounds for activism against gender discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence in the Danish Armed Forces. As such, this presentation will thus conceptualize the political efficacy of vulnerability that informs (queer-feminist) activism as a project of persistent societal change.

NEGOTIATING (IN)VISIBILITY: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ASEXUAL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES OF UNIVERSITY

Erin Hampson

Much of our understanding of sexuality and its impacts on social life still function under the sexually normative notion that sexuality is an essential part of human experience. Therefore, the incorporation of asexuality within social contexts in the field of gender and sexuality studies is important in understanding how sexual normativity functions to marginalise non-sexualities and the negotiations necessary in the everyday social lives of those who do not fit within the dominant frame.

This exploratory study sought to provide insight into the everyday experiences of self-identified asexuals within university contexts, the challenges they face and the ways in which these are understood and navigated on an individual level. Four self-identified asexual participants, attending UK universities, were recruited through LGBTQIA+ Facebook groups. Data was collected through in-depth, auto-driven photo-elicitation interviews, that were conducted in order to offer participants greater autonomy over representing their stories. The data was then analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. Three superordinate themes were developed: navigating normative social space, navigating (in)visibility and coming-out, and creating safer spaces. Participants identified that the dominant drinking social culture and associated sexual connotations within universities acts as an exclusionary force in social life, that required their effortful navigation. Fear of others' reactions to their coming out and their own sense of responsibility for visibility were found as conflicting factors in coming out decisions, which also required effortful navigation across social circumstance. The necessity for finding and creating safer spaces, within which participants were separate from societal expectation and social pressures, was significant for self-preservation.

Institutions are encouraged to make steps towards inclusivity in policy, non-discriminatory practices, and the de-centralising of sexuality in social contexts, all for creating structural change for the amelioration of asexual experiences in universities and consequently increase the approachability of university social life for prospective students.

PLENARY DISCUSSION: RESEARCHING SEXUALITY IN AND BEYOND EUROPE. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION; PARTICIPANTS: ISABEL CROWHURST, GIULIA GAROFALO, CONVENORS: CHIARA BERTONE, AGATA STASIŃSKA - 16.30-18.00

RESEARCHING SEXUALITY IN AND BEYOND EUROPE. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

**PARTICIPANTS: ISABEL CROWHURST, GIULIA GAROFALO, PAUL RYAN
CONVENORS: CHIARA BERTONE, AGATA STASIŃSKA**

The final plenary aims to open a space for discussion on the challenges and opportunities of doing sexuality research in our times, as a way to share reflections about the Conference and about strategies to preserve and develop spaces for critical sexuality studies within and beyond Europe. It will be an occasion to pull the strings on how issues of positionality, interdisciplinarity, intersectionality, and what it means to decolonise sexuality studies, have (or haven't) been addressed at the Conference, and on how they are lived in our experiences as researchers. As an introduction to the discussion, the speech by Isabel Crowhurst, Giulia Garofalo and Paul Ryan will focus on the main themes emerging from their study on the experiences of sex work researchers.

SOCIAL EVENT FOR CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS: QUEER VOICES FROM HERE AND THERE: MAKEOUT & STREFA WENUS Z MILO

Venue: Spółdzielnia Ogniwo, 28 Paulińska St.

February, 14th, 19.00-22.00 Social event for conference participants: Queer Voices from Here and There: Makeout & Strefa Wenus z Milo

Finger food will be provided.

Strefa Wenus z Milo is an association founded by and for women with disabilities. It is an association with disability rights, feminist and queer agenda. We started the organization because we want our voice to be heard and our capabilities and needs to be recognized. We are opposed to an authoritarian way of making decisions on the matters that affect us. That is why we decided to take matters into our own hands and start working being guided by the principle "Nothing about us without us". We do not want people to pity us because very often this attitude leads to inappropriate solutions. We want to be treated as partners in action, not as subjects of care. We want to be recognized as citizens who, like the rest of society, have the right to development, self-determination, and independence. We are self-organizing since 2014, we speak and educate on the intersections of disability, feminism and queer issues and also take our claims to the streets - we organize and do take part in manifestations for disability rights, anti-violence, feminist and reproductive rights protests (e.g. women strike) as well as Prides and Equality Marches. We want women with disabilities to be heard.

WWW: <http://www.strefawenuszmilo.org/>

fb: <https://www.facebook.com/StowarzyszenieStrefaWenusZMilo/>

MAKEOUT is a Belarusian feminist anti-discriminatory project on gender and sexuality that seeks to heighten the awareness, promote mindfulness, and strengthen the LGBTQ-community and other vulnerable groups, which face sexual and gender identity discrimination.

We collect and archive the history of the LGBTQ life in Belarus, document personal experiences of self-identification, create a space where we can be ourselves.

During the event we will show the 1st Belarus LGBT documentary "They still smile" (2002). The atmosphere of the beginning of the 2000s is conveyed in this short film. You can see archive records of the International Conference "Lesbian movement" (Minsk, 8-9 March 2002), as well as interviews with members of the LGBT movement of those years in Belarus.

We propose a discussion after the screening, where we can share our experiences as MAKEOUT and LGBTQ activists in Belarus and speak about the present context with LGBTQ issues in Belarus.

COMMUNITY BREAKFAST

Venue: Massolit cooks, 25 Józefa St. (Kazimierz)

February, 16th, 10.00-12.00 Community breakfast

We invite all conference participants to join the community breakfast during which we will talk, eat and laugh together.